

Four Hundred Years of Occupation: Breton Fishermen's Adaptive Strategies to the Landscape of the Petit Nord Region of Newfoundland.

Mélissa Burns, PhD Candidate

Department of Archaeology, Memorial University

Beginning in 2001, Dr. Peter Pope of Memorial University has undertaken an extensive project –*The Archaeology of the Petit Nord* which seeks to develop the archaeology of the Breton fishermen established in Northern Newfoundland between the 16th and early 20th centuries. The occupation of the Petit Nord by the Bretons is an important, yet often neglected part of the Canadian history. It constitutes the largest French presence in North America, outside the province of Québec. Doctoral research through a landscape analysis on how the Breton fishermen adapted themselves to the Petit Nord will allow a reconsideration of four hundred years of French occupation in Northern Newfoundland and Canada (1508-1904).

My PhD dissertation explores a phenomenology of landscape integrating recent theoretical approaches with concrete studies in small-scale societies. In particular, I will analyse how archaeological features such as stages, ramps, paths, cook rooms, cabins, bread ovens, monumental crosses and cemeteries have played an active role in creating the landscape of the fishery in the Petit Nord. While archaeologists need to study the material culture to understand the past, they also need to recreate past interactions among spaces, human actions and material remains. This approach is essential to promote a more-balanced understanding of the human presence in a certain region. Furthermore, human life processes like rites of passage include internal formations of the landscapes in which people have lived. In short, time and landscape are essential factors to document and interpret archaeological sites. In this context, I consider landscape as a cultural concept that can help archaeologists to understand a particular cognitive or symbolic space order.